

a conifer.

Habitat at this site is mixed montane forest of fir *A. spectabilis* and birch *Betula utilis* with scattered maple *Acer* sp., and a relatively open understorey of saplings, shrubs and bamboo *Arundinaria* spp.

*C. f. mandelli* ranges from the Kulu region of northwest India across the Nepalese Himalaya to extreme western Arunachal Pradesh (Tawang; Ali and Ripley 1973). Its abundance has been variously reported as occasional (Fleming *et al.* 1984), fairly common (Inskipp and Inskipp 1985), and common (Ali and Ripley 1973). However, few breeding data exist for this treecreeper subspecies. Nest building in an old fir stump at 3355 m was recorded by Polunin on 19 April 1952 at Punga Lekh, Jumla district (Inskipp and Inskipp 1985). Juveniles independent of parents were collected at 3950 m and 4200 m in Khumbu, East Nepal in June 1962 (Diesselhorst 1968). Thus, this most recent breeding record is similar to those previously noted with respect to nesting habitat, elevation, and temporal activity.

Also on 9 May 1985, but further northwest of Dori Lekh along the Khapar Khola, I noted nesting activity of the Himalayan Treecreeper *C. himalayana infima* near Bumra village at about 2740 m. A single bird, presumably

a female, was observed in an open riverside grove hitching up a walnut *Juglans regia* tree with a beakful of short yellow grass. A pursuing Sparrow Hawk *Accipiter nisus* thrice attempted to grab her by clumsily manoeuvring through the branches, but each time the treecreeper successfully evaded the raptor by sidling around the walnut trunk, until it flew off unnoticed.

The four certhiid species in Nepal all occur in the far western region. However, the Brown-throated Treecreeper *C. discolor discolor* and the Rusty-flanked Treecreeper *C. nepalensis* are primarily eastern Himalayan species, sparsely distributed at the western limits of their ranges (Inskipp and Inskipp 1985). Niche distinctions between the more common *C. f. mandelli* and *C. h. infima* remain poorly understood, although the former appears to favour higher altitude mixed conifer forests where associated rhododendron *Rhododendron* spp. is replaced with birch (Martens 1981, Inskipp and Inskipp 1985). Clearly, further study of certhiid ecology in western Nepal, especially breeding biology and factors affecting competitive exclusion, is needed.

September 26, 1987.

JACK H. COX

#### REFERENCES

- ALI, S. & RIPLEY, S.D. (1973): Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Vol 9. Oxford University Press, Bombay and London.
- DIESSELHORST, G. (1968): Beitrage zur Okologie der Vogel Zentral-und-Ost-Nepals. *Khumbu Himal* 2: 1-417.
- FLEMING, R.L. SR., FLEMING, R.L. JR., & BANGDAL, L.S. (1984): Birds of Nepal. Second edition. Avalok, Kathmandu.
- INSKIPP, C. & INSKIPP, T. (1985): A Guide to the Birds of Nepal. Croom Helm, London and Sydney.
- MARTENS, J. (1981): Lautau Berungen der Baumlauffer des Himalaya. *Behaviour* 77(4): 287-318.

### 30. FOREST WAGTAIL *MOTACILLA INDICA* AT JASDAN, GUJARAT

On 19 November 1987 I saw a single Forest Wagtail *Motacilla indica* in my compound. The bird was seen again on 21st and 22nd and I managed to catch it in a mist net on 23 November 1987 and ring it (ring No. A. 39294).

This bird is a rare winter visitor to Gujarat.

November 28, 1987.

SATYAJIT KHACHAR

### 31. HOST PLANTS USED BY BAYA WEAVER BIRD *PLOCEUS PHILIPPINUS* (L.) FOR NESTING IN UDAIPUR DISTRICT, RAJASTHAN

During the breeding season of 1986, I surveyed some parts of Udaipur District of Southern Rajasthan to study the free preference of *Ploceus philippinus* for nesting. I travelled on foot or cycle and sometimes by motorcycle along the different roads in the district. I surveyed a 50 m

wide strip of land on either sides of the 200 km. long road in different localities including some forest areas like the Keora Ki Nall Reserve Forest and Banki Block of Udaipur (south) Division and Jaisamand Wildlife Sanctuary. My findings are as below (Tables 1 & 2).

TABLE 1  
DICOT HOST PLANTS USED FOR NESTING

Family of preferred plant	Preferred plant	Number of plants used for nesting
CAPPARIDACEAE	<i>Capparis sepparia</i>	1
MELIACEAE	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	2
RHAMNACEAE	<i>Zizyphus mauritiana</i>	13
LEGUMINOSAE	<i>Acacia nilotica</i> var. <i>indica</i>	98
	<i>Acacia leucophloea</i>	39
	<i>Prosopis spicigera</i>	6
	<i>Prosopis juliflora</i>	2
	<i>Albizia lebbek</i>	1
	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	1
	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	7
	<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i>	2
	<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i>	2
	<i>Pithecolobium dulce</i>	4
ULMACEAE	<i>Holoptelia integrifolia</i>	6
MORACEAE	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	1
RUTACEAE	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	1
EBENACEAE	<i>Diosphyros cordifolia</i>	2
ANACARDIACEAE	<i>Lenia grandis</i>	2
SANTALACEAE	<i>Santalum album</i>	2
ANONACEAE	<i>Anona squamosa</i>	1
SIMAROUBIACEAE	<i>Ailanthus excelsa</i>	2
<b>Total:</b>	12 families, 19 genera, 21 species,	195

TABLE 2  
MONOCOT HOST PLANTS USED FOR NESTING

Family of preferred plant	Preferred plant	Number of plants used for nesting
Palmae	<i>Phoenix silvestris</i>	50
Gramineae	<i>Dendrocalamus strictus</i>	1
<b>Total:</b>	2 families, 2 genera, 2 species,	51 plants.

It can be seen from Table 1 that *Acacia nilotica* var. *indica* is the most preferred plant for nesting followed by *Phoenix silvestris* and *Acacia leucophloea*. It is also clear from Tables 1 & 2 that a number of forest species can be selected for nesting.

of Forest, Udaipur (North) Division for his encouragement. My thanks are also due to Mr Balvant Singh Kanthalia, Forester, and Mr. Ajat Shatru Singh Bhatti, Forester, who have helped me in collection of some data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Mr U.M. Sahai, I.F.S., Dy. Conservator

August 18, 1987.

SATISHKUMAR SHARMA